

**REMARKS**

Claims 12-19 and 29-37 are pending and claims 12-19 and 29-37 stand rejected. By virtue of this response, claims 18 and 33 have been cancelled, claims 12, 29, 34 and 36 have been amended, and no new claims have been added. Accordingly, claims 12-17, 19, 29-32, and 34-37 are currently under consideration. The amendment to the claims is supported at least by the claims as originally presented; accordingly, no new matter has been added.

For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants' remarks are presented in the same order in which they were raised in the Office Action.

**Claim Objections**

Claim 12 stands objected to because of the second to last line, which recites "the first guiding element," should be changed to "at least the first guiding element," to remain consistent, although only one guiding element as been particularly recited.

Claim 12 has been amended herein to correct the informality as suggested by the Examiner; accordingly, the objection should be withdrawn.

**Claim Rejections under 35 USC 103**

Claims 12-19 and 29-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mewes et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,915,982) in view of Hentrich (U.S. Patent No. 6,095,445).

Applicants have amended independent claims 12, 29, and 36 to include features similar to (but not identical to) claims 18 and 33. In particular, claim 12 is amended to recite "wherein the guide surface is positioned within the storage cartridge housing to guide the storage tape away from the supply reel and then back to reengage tape of the supply reel before extending to the access window." Claims 19 and 36 are amended similarly. Such features are not disclosed by Mewes or Hentrich, whether taken alone or in combination, and in fact, Mewes teaches away from the features recited by the present claims.

The Examiner states, with respect to claim 18 (and similarly claim 33), that Mewes discloses “wherein the guide surface 32 is positioned within the storage cartridge housing to guide the storage tape away from the supply reel and then back to reengage the supply reel (see col. 4, lines 44-50) before extending to the access window, as clearly shown in Fig. 2.”

Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that Mewes does not disclose or suggest that the storage tape is guided back to reengage the supply reel or tape of the supply reel. In particular, the tape path does not reengage the tape of the supply reel, whether via direct physical contact or air lubricated engagement (see, e.g., paragraph [0026] of the present application). In contrast, Mewes discloses that “tape guide 32 defines the pathway of the storage tape 28 from the single tape reel assembly to the tape access window 40 such that the pathway between the tape guide 32 and the tape access window 40 is constant whether the hub 52 retains many, or few, wraps of storage tape 28.” (Mewes, Col. 4, lines 31-35, Fig. 5; see also, col. 4, lines 54-60; col. 5, lines 52-67 (“constant pathway 92”)) (Emphasis added.) Accordingly, the pathway of storage tape 28 does not reengage the tape of the tape reel as evident at least by the disclosed “constant pathway 92,” whether hub 52 retains few or many wraps of storage tape 28.

Moreover, Mewes does not fairly suggest modifying the disclosure thereof such that the storage tape is guided back to reengage the tape of the supply reel. Mewes makes clear that the “constant pathway 92” is an advantageous feature and a principle of operation of the guide surface 32; accordingly, there is no suggestion or motivation to modify Mewes to meet the features of the present claims. (MPEP § 2143.01, i.e., “The proposed modification cannot change the principle of operation of a reference.”)

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Mewes fails to disclose or suggest the features of claims 1, 29, and 36 (as well as claims depending therefrom), and the rejection should be withdrawn.

**CONCLUSION**

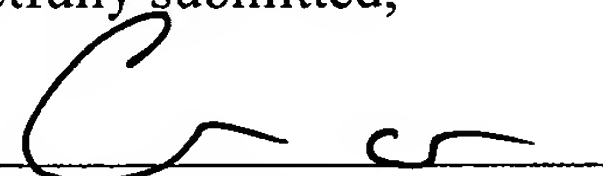
In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 249212022700. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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